

## **IOWA COURT OF APPEALS COURTROOM PROTOCOL**

**Check-in.** The Iowa Court of Appeals is on the third floor of the Iowa Judicial Branch Building located at 1111 E. Court Avenue in Des Moines. Please check in with the assistant bailiff inside the entrance to the court’s offices at the south side of the rotunda on the third floor before oral arguments. Plan on arriving at least ten to fifteen minutes before your assigned oral argument time to check in with the assistant bailiff. The assistant bailiff will be available to check you in thirty minutes before the beginning of each oral argument session.

**Preparation Room.** You may prepare for your argument in the attorney preparation room immediately to the right as you approach the Iowa Court of Appeals courtroom. You may also use the light court located on the second floor.

**Electronic Devices.** Personal computers, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices may be used by counsel at counsel table and the lectern, but counsel must ensure those devices do not create visual or audio disturbances. Cellular telephones must be turned off or placed on mute while you are in the courtroom. Video recording, audio recording, and taking photographs are not allowed in the courtroom unless permission is granted by the court.

**Attorney Seating.** On arriving at the courtroom, counsel in the first case should seat themselves at counsel table before court starts.

It is customary for **Appellant’s counsel** to sit at the counsel table to the **left** as one faces the bench, and for **Appellee’s counsel** to sit at the counsel table to the **right** (the window side of the courtroom).

**Only attorneys at counsel table.** Clients and other observers should sit in the public seating area behind the bar— the railing that divides the courtroom. Only lawyers arguing before the court may proceed beyond the bar.

**Attorneys-in-waiting.** Counsel whose appeal is not scheduled first should also sit in the public seating area. When counsel from the prior case have left counsel tables, then the counsel for the next argument can proceed to the counsel table. If waiting in the attorney preparation room or outside the courtroom counsel should make sure to enter the courtroom before conclusion of the previous arguments.

**Public Seating.** The public seating area accommodates about forty people. If you expect more people will be present for a particular case, please contact the court at 515-348-4920 before your argument. There is an auditorium available on the first floor of the Judicial Branch Building that can be set up so spectators may watch and listen to oral arguments. Clients and other observers should be advised by counsel of courtroom etiquette including the rules regarding electronic devices, that no food or drink is allowed in the public seating area, and that observers should remove their hats while in the courtroom.

**Argument.** Once the presiding judge has announced the case, counsel for the appellant may proceed to the lectern.

**Call Them “Judges.”** Address the members of the court as “judges,” not “justices.”

**Time.** Unless otherwise ordered, arguments are scheduled for ten (10) minutes each for the appellant and appellee, plus five (5) minutes of rebuttal time for the appellant.

**Splitting Time.** Counsel who are sharing argument time must inform the court of their argument plan. Counsel, not the presiding judge or the bailiff, are responsible for keeping track of time and carrying out their plan.

**Rebuttal.** Appellant is automatically allotted five (5) minutes for rebuttal; there is no need to ask to reserve time for rebuttal.

**Timer.** There is a digital timer on the lectern. The timer shows how much time you have remaining. A yellow light comes on when there are five (5) minutes remaining during regular arguments and when there are two and one-half (2.5) minutes remaining in rebuttal.

**Respect the Red Light.** When the red blinking light comes on, conclude your thought promptly and resume your seat at counsel table. If you are in the middle of answering a question, politely request permission to finish your thought (e.g., “I see that my time is up. May I complete my answer?”). If permitted, finish your thought with a sentence or two.

**Make Way for the Next Argument.** Once both sides are done in your case, promptly yield your table to the attorney arguing the next case.